

WELCOME[home]BATS

When Martin Hansen first visited the cave in 1887, he found a much different environment than what we experience now. In our efforts to restore the cave to its original ambiance, your Resource Management team has constructed new bat gates to protect both the caves and cave biota, and to restore as nearly as possible the original appearance of the Timpanogos Caves.

Previous gates were installed for cave security, not for maintaining the cave ecosystem and bat populations. The new gates that visitors will see as they enter and exit the caves have been designed and installed to maintain the cave's security, restore the cave's natural airflow, maximize the ease of bat passage, and eliminate the chances of bat predation.

THE[war]ON WEEDS

Removal of non-native plant species, and the subsequent erosional problems has, for the last few years, been a concern for the staff of Resource Management. Invasive species have the potential to overtake native species. This can create an ecosystem with low diversity. Weeds, such as cheat grass, can also be an extreme fire hazard if left unchecked.

Looking at the slopes on the way up you may have noticed minor erosion where non-natives have been removed. Small amounts of erosion are typical and expected. We are pleased that this project has gone as expected, and are also happy with the new growth in the several revegetation areas along the trail. In approximately 1-2 years the native grasses that have been seeded in the place of non-native plants will grow and establish, stabilizing the soil.

This May we also decided that the greenhouse needed some improving. We replaced the yellow sheets that blocked much of the sunlight reaching the plants with clear sheets. This face lift allows the plants to photosynthesize and grow at a quicker rate, allowing us to increase revegetation. The new improved greenhouse was also cleaned and now serves as a great place to breath some fresh air after a hard day at work.

HAIL THE[rails]

Imagine, You've just about completed one of the most exciting tours of your life, you duck under thirteen stitch, reach to stabilize yourself as you explore the awkward passage, and squish! Your hand slips and slides across a gooey handrail. Three minutes later as you wander through the boneyard you ask yourself who is more unstable, you or the rusty handrail. Although tours are guided by world class rangers, close proximity of cave formations along the trail provides an easy opportunity for visitors to touch, lean against, or break cave formations.

Current cave handrails are inadequately placed, and are made-up of three different types of metals; aluminum, galvanized, and stainless steel. The aluminum has started to oxidize because of the cave's constant 97% humidity and 45 degree temperature. This oxidation is introducing foreign materials into the cave ecosystem. These soft aluminum rails are also a safety and maintenance concern. The rails break frequently and have been repaired and re-bolted for years beyond their functional life.

In order to remedy these and other handrail problems, throughout the summer re-

source management will be working to replace the old hand rails with cleaner and stronger stainless steel ones. New hand rails will help to minimize possible resource damage, and provide a safe experience for monument visitors. We will take every precaution, to make sure the new rails do not damage or obstruct cave formations, and do all possible to not disturb any tours.



[cave]HIDE AND SEEK

It's hard to manage something if you don't know **WHAT** or **WHERE** it is. This summer, we will map, and input into a Geographical Information System, significant features throughout the caves. These features include cultural resources, rare or unusual formations, water and photo-monitoring stations, and lighting systems. This project will allow us to better manage the cave system in all aspects of park management; resource management, maintenance, interpretation, and research.

If you or a visitor notice something of interest, or see something unusual or curious, please notify one of the resource management rangers. Also feel free to check out the website at www.nps.gov/tica/RMweb. Have a great summer.